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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 002282

SIPDIS

OFFICIAL INFORMAL

DEPT FOR SA/INS FROM AMBASSADOR WILLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12-11-12

TAGS: AMGT CE KWMM

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL INFORMAL NUMBER 172 (12-11-02)

Classified by Amb. Will, Reasons 1.5 (b, d)

CONTENTS: SMALL ARMS

- DTC CASES CONTINUED
- IS THE PM PACKIN' HEAT?

SMALL ARMS

¶1. (C) We wanted to get back to you re your incoming o/i note dated December 9 on small arms destruction. There is some history here. Per State 11328 dated January 18, Mission deployed Department's talking points on small arms/light weapons destruction (see Colombo 139 dated January 22). DAO has continued to pursue this matter directly with the MoD throughout the year and most recently did so earlier this week. At this stage, from what we understand, the GSL is still trying to inventory the SA/LW equipment it has. We estimate that it will take another two to three months before the inventory is complete. Although it has expressed some interest, we do not think the SA/LW destruction program as outlined in your December 9 o/i note is a high priority item for the GSL. There are companies that have expressed interest in purchasing (repeat purchasing) some of Sri Lanka's surplus weapons, for example. The program we are offering does not appear to offer the GSL anything in return for the weapons, particularly when compared to the possible income that could be derived by selling them. Mission will continue to pursue this matter with the GSL, but thinks a more effective program would be one that permits the USG to purchase usable small arms/light weapons from the GSL. If Mission wants us to remind the GSL of our policy position on this program or has new points distinct from those in State 11328 we would be happy to deliver them per a front-channel. (POL/DAO)

DTC CASES CONTINUED

¶2. (C) Per the recent exchange of o/i's (dated December 6 and 9), we have located the case numbers for three DTC cases. We believe two of the cases have been approved. We would appreciate it if you would confirm the status of these cases with DTC:

-- Case 817436: This should be the reference number for the case of 50,000 rounds of .32 caliber ammunition and 325,000 rounds of .22 caliber. This ammunition would be used by the Sri Lankan Army's (SLA) shooting team in the Olympics and other athletic events. We believe this is the case that is still unresolved.

-- Case 811383: This should be the reference number for the case of USD 15,900 of components for 120mm mortar rounds for delivery to the SLA. This case may have been resolved.

-- Case 815294: This should be the reference number for the case of USD 2.6 million in spare parts for the AN/TPZ-36 Radar for the SLA. This case may have been resolved.

Finally, per our o/i dated December 9, we are still confused as to why some quarters in DRL seem to believe there is a prohibition on the sale of lethal weapons to Sri Lanka. There ain't one! (POL/DAO)

IS THE PM PACKIN' HEAT?

¶3. (SBU) FYI. Recent press articles quote the president as accusing the Prime Minister of packing a gun and threatening to kill her if she did not cooperate with the governing coalition. Her comments were reportedly made in a recent speech to party members in which she also purportedly said she was handing over the reins of the Sri Lankan Freedom Party to her brother Anura and that she might resign in the near future. When asked about the reports, Harim Peiris of the President's office told us that he had not seen the text of her speech, but he did not think that she was actually saying she had been physically threatened by the PM. He added that she had no intention of resigning (her term is up in early 2007).

14. (C) It sounds plausible that the president attacked the PM in this way. She has previously accused the PM of demanding a bribe from her years ago to get her son into a local school. She has also said other nasty things about the PM. All of this has not exactly added to good cohabitation relations, as you know. The latest comments do not seem to have ginned up too much of a problem yet, however: the image of the mild-mannered, soft-spoken PM packin' heat and carrying on like Joe Pesci seems pretty much beyond belief. (POL)

WILLS